

**REMARKS**

With this Amendment, the pending claims are claims 1, 2, and 4-21. In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 1 for an informality. The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 8, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Goorhouse patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,076,237). The Examiner rejected claims 12-17, 19, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Ida et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,058,577). The Examiner rejected claims 6 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Goorhouse patent in view of the Ida et al. patent. The Examiner rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Ida et al. patent in view of the Goorhouse patent. The Examiner objected to claims 10 and 20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

**Objection to Claim 1**

The Examiner noted that, in line 6 of claim 1, as amended in the Amendment filed February 14, 2003, the clean version of claim 1 included "any" while the marked-up version included "at least." As shown above, Applicants have amended "any" to -- at least --. No new matter has been added by this amendment, nor has the scope of the claim been narrowed.

**Claims 1, 2, and 4-11**

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 8, and 11 under § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Goorhouse patent, and rejected claims 6 and 9 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Goorhouse patent in view of the Ida et al. patent. As shown

above, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 3, and canceled claim 3. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections because the Goorhouse patent does not disclose or suggest at least "an attached body being attached onto a base portion of each base plate" and "wherein one of the snap elements has the base portion protruded from an end of the base plate so as to have an L-shaped cross section" as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1.

The Goorhouse patent is directed to a quick-release buckle for connecting two strap ends. This patent discloses a buckle 10 comprised of a female member in the form of a shell or receptacle 11 and a male member in the form of a plunger 12. (Col. 3, lines 21-25.) An upper face 13 of the receptacle 11 has a square or rectangular opening 14 that is positioned near an end 15 of the receptacle 11 that is open and receives the plunger 12. (Col. 3, lines 31-35.) A removable base 16 for making a fixed belt connection is attached at the opposite end of the receptacle 11. (Col. 3, lines 35-37.)

The plunger 12 includes a tapered nose 17, a rectangular latch section 18, and a base 19. (Col. 3, lines 39-42.) The rectangular latch section 18 includes a lower plate 20 and a wedge-shaped upper plate 21. (Col. 3, lines 44-45.) In an unstressed position, prior to inserting the plunger 12 into the receptacle 11, the upper plate 21 has its lower surface 22 in parallel alignment with the lower plate 20 leaving a flex space 23 between the lower surface 22 and the lower plate 20. (Col. 3, lines 49-53.) The base 19 is integral with the plunger 12, extending rearwardly from the rectangular latch section 18, and has a general form of a belt buckle with an inboard slot 35 and a outboard slot 36, the two slots defining a central bar 37. (Col. 4, lines 53-58.)

The buckle 10 is latched by inserting the plunger 12, tapered nose 17 first, into the open end 15 of the receptacle 11. (Col. 3, lines 61-63.) As the upper plate 21 of the plunger 12 enters the interior of the receptacle 11, the plate 21 is compressed and deflects downwardly to obtain sufficient clearance for entry. (Col. 3, lines 63-66.) Once a rearward edge 25 of the plate 21 becomes aligned with a rearward edge 26 of the opening 14, the plate 21 recoils and snaps into a locked condition. (Col. 3, line 66 - col. 4, line 4.)

In addition, the Goorhouse patent discloses that a leg of the base 16 is inserted into a loop of a belt 34 when the base 16 is disengaged from the receptacle 11 (see col. 4, lines 38-44; see Fig. 6) and an adjustable belt 43 is installed in a conventional manner through the slots 35, 36 of the base 19 (col. 5, lines 1-8; see Figs. 6 and 10).

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserted that the Goorhouse patent discloses two snap elements 11, 12, and that "as shown in Fig. 1A, snap element (11) has a base portion (top wall portion) protruding from an end of its flat base plate forming an L-shape in cross-section." (*Office Action*, pp. 2-3.) Applicants respectfully assert that the receptacle 11 is not a snap element that "has the base portion protruded from an end of the base plate so as to have an L-shaped cross section," wherein "an attached body [is] attached onto a base portion of each base plate."

First, Applicants disagree that the top wall portion of the receptacle 11 has an L-shape in cross-section. Instead, the top wall or upper face 13 of the receptacle 11 merely has an opening 14; there is nothing L-shaped about the upper face 13. Moreover, an attached body is not attached onto the upper face 13 of the receptacle 11. Instead, to the extent that a belt 34 is attached to the receptacle 11, the belt 34 is

attached to the base 16 that may be fixed to the receptacle 11. The base 16 is not L-shaped in cross section but instead is half circular in shape and circular in cross section.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. For at least the same reasons, all of its dependent claims, namely, claims 2 and 4-11, should also be in condition for allowance.

**Claims 12-21**

The Examiner rejected claims 12-17, 19, and 21 under § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Ida et al. patent, and rejected claim 18 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Ida et al. patent in view of the Goorhouse patent. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections because the Ida et al. patent does not disclose or suggest at least "a plurality of pairs of snap elements capable of engaging with or disengaging from each other in an opposing direction, wherein one snap element of a pair of snap elements has an engaging head provided protrudedly on a base plate, while the other snap element of the pair of snap elements has an engaging hole portion provided in another base plate" as recited in Applicants' claim 12.

The Ida et al. patent is directed to an attachment structure for a fastener member to a sheet-like object. In one embodiment, referring to Figs. 1-5, this patent discloses first and second attachments 13, 21 for engaging a wrist fastening band 20 to a glove body 10. (Col. 3, lines 59-64.) The first and second attachments 13, 21 are attached to the glove body 10 and the wrist fastening band 20, respectively, by sewing, welding, or adhering using an adhesive. (Col. 3, line 65 - col. 4, line 6.) The first attachment 13 has a base plate 13a in the form of a rectangular strip and a plurality of longitudinally arranged sockets 14 projecting from one surface of the base plate 13a.

(Col. 4, lines 7-10.) Each socket 14 has a socket hole 14a, and locking holes 14c, 13b.

(Col. 4, lines 10-19.) The second attachment 21 has the form of a comb-like strip having a plurality of plugs 21a, with each plug 21a projecting perpendicularly from one longitudinal edge of the strip and terminating in vertically projecting upper and lower hooks 21b. (Col. 4, lines 45-49.)

To combine the glove body 10 and the wrist fastening band 20 to form a complete golf glove 1, the second attachment 21 is brought into locking engagement with the first attachment 13. (Col. 4, line 66 - col. 5, line 2.) More particularly, the individual plugs 21a of the second attachment 21 mounted on the wrist fastening band 20 are inserted into the corresponding socket holes 14a of the first attachment 13 mounted on the glove body 10. (Col. 5, lines 3-10.) This brings the upper and lower hooks 21b of each plug 21a into locking engagement with their respective locking holes 14c, 13b of each socket 14 of the first attachment 13. (*Id.*)

In another embodiment, referring to Figs. 6-9, the Ida et al. patent discloses a first attachment 130, which is in the form of a rectangular strip. (Col. 6, lines 15-17.) The first attachment 130 has a plurality of laterally elongated rectangular socket holes 131 longitudinally arranged at predetermined distances. (Col. 6, lines 17-22.) A second attachment 210, which is in the form of a rectangular strip of a base plate 210a, has a plurality of longitudinally arranged plugs 211. (Col. 6, lines 23-27.) Each plug 211 has a T-shape, having an engaging head 211a and a stem 211b standing thereon, which may be removably engaged one in each of the socket holes 131 of the first attachment 130. (Col. 6, lines 27-30.)

To combine the glove body 10 to the wrist fastening band 20, after the first attachment 130 is attached to the glove body 10 by sewing and the second attachment 210 is attached to the wrist fastening band 20 also by sewing, the first attachment 130 is pressed against the second attachment 210 by force so that the engaging heads 211a of the plugs 211 are fitted into the socket holes 131 of the first attachment 130. (Col. 6, lines 36-53.)

Thus, the Ida et al. patent only discloses (1) referring, in particular, to Figs. 4 and 5, a single base plate 13a for a plurality of sockets 14 for the first attachment 13, and a single comb-like strip (not numbered) having a plurality of plugs 21a for the second attachment 21 or (2) referring, in particular, to Fig. 8, a single rectangular strip (not numbered) for a plurality of socket holes 131 for the first attachment 130, and a single rectangular strip of a base plate 210a for the second attachment 210. In contrast, Applicants' claim 1 includes "a plurality of pairs of snap elements," with each snap element having a base plate. More particularly, in Applicants' claim 1, "one snap element of a pair of snap elements has an engaging head provided on a base plate, while the other snap element of the pair of snap elements has an engaging hole portion provided in another base plate."

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that claim 12 is in condition for allowance. For at least the same reasons, all of its dependent claims, namely, claims 13-21, should also be in condition for allowance.

FINNEGAN  
HENDERSON  
FARABOW  
GARRETT &  
DUNNER LLP

1300 I Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.408.4000  
Fax 202.408.4400  
www.finnegan.com

**Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Office Action and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding arguments in favor of patentability are advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,  
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By: Stephanie S. Conis Gauthier  
Stephanie S. Conis Gauthier  
Reg. No. 40,569

FINNEGAN  
HENDERSON  
FARABOW  
GARRETT &  
DUNNER LLP

1300 I Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.408.4000  
Fax 202.408.4400  
www.finnegan.com